

## A Reflective Practice Tool for

# SELF-ASSESSING FRONTLINE CASE PRACTICE AND IDENTIFYING NEEDED SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

by

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### A Note to Caseworkers and Supervisors

The purpose of this reflective practice tool is to assist the caseworker with a challenging case. This is done by identifying particular strengths and areas of concern using child status and system performance questions for open child welfare cases. Through this self-assessment and case discussion process, cases can be identified that require added attention or assistance to reduce risks or overcome barriers. The caseworker and supervisor will select for discussion non-emergency cases that are complex or worrisome. Using the following questions in the protocol as a guide, the caseworker will note any barriers that are thwarting efforts or results while highlighting strengths in practice. The caseworker, working in

collaboration with the supervisor, can explore and identify supports and steps necessary to move the case forward, including specific forms of assistance needed to implement such steps. When using the child status and system performance questions that follow, it is important to focus on what is happening now for this child and family. Following the child status and system performance questions, there is a final set of questions that assess progress towards safe case closure and what steps and assistance may be needed to overcome any barriers limiting practice or progress in the case. This process is used to provide practical help to caseworkers on difficult cases.

<u>Child Status Questions</u>	<u>Comments and Concerns</u>
<p><b>SAFETY:</b> • Is the child safe from manageable risks of harm caused by others or by him/herself? • Are others safe from this child, if he/she has behavioral problems? • Are there indications of intimidation or unreasonable fear in the child's life at home, in the neighborhood, and/or at school? • Are the caregiver and children safe from domestic violence?</p>	
<p><b>STABILITY:</b> • Are the child's daily living and learning arrangements stable and free from risk of disruption? • Does the child have a stable living environment now and for the past 12 months? • Does the child have stability in his/her school setting now and for the past 12 months? • What are the known transitions within the next 45 days? • What transitional services are being provided?</p>	
<p><b>APPROPRIATENESS OF PLACEMENT:</b> • Is the child in the least restrictive and most appropriate placement consistent with the child's needs, age, ability, peer group, language, and culture? • Is the child in the most appropriate educational placement consistent with the child's age, ability, developmental level, culture, and peer group?</p>	
<p><b>PROGRESS TOWARDS PERMANENCE:</b> • Is the child living with caregivers who the child, caregivers, and other stakeholders believe will endure until the child becomes independent? • If not, is a permanency plan presently being implemented on a <u>timely basis</u> that will ensure the child will live in enduring relationships that provide sense of family, stability, and belonging?</p>	
<p><b>WELL-BEING:</b> • Are the child's basic physical, medical, and health needs being met? • Is the child doing well emotionally and behaviorally? • Is the child attending school regularly and making progress in school consistent with promotion and school completion? • How does the child demonstrate responsible personal behaviors? • Are these behaviors consistent with the child's age and ability, at home and school?</p>	

<p><u>Case Practice Questions</u></p>	<p><u>Comments and Concerns</u></p>
<p><b>ENGAGING SERVICE PARTNERS:</b> • Do you have a trust-based working relationship with the child, family, and any other service partners working with the child and family? • In what ways do family members or substitute caregivers participate in the service planning and decision-making process?</p>	
<p><b>UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION:</b> • Do the child's parents, caseworker, teacher, and other service providers share a "big-picture" understanding of the child and family situation and their strengths and needs so that sensible supports and services can be planned? • What are the <u>critical underlying issues</u> that must be resolved in order for the child to live safely with his/her family or to obtain another appropriate and enduring home?</p>	
<p><b>PLANNING RESPONSIVE SERVICES:</b> • Are services responsive to the current case situation? • Is the course of action guided by a sensible long-term view that has a reasonable chance of getting successful results? • Are core issues being resolved? • What sustainable supports are necessary for family independence and case closure being put into place? • How are barriers to progress being addressed to move the case forward to safety and timely permanency?</p>	
<p><b>IMPLEMENTING SUPPORTS AND SERVICES:</b> • Is implementation of supports and services timely, competent, of appropriate intensity and continuity, and of sufficient adherence to best practice models to achieve desired results for the child and family? • What necessary supports, services, and resources are available? • How well do they meet the needs of the child and family?</p>	
<p><b>GETTING AND USING RESULTS:</b> • What intervention efforts are leading to positive results for the child and family? • In what ways are risks being reduced while family functioning and well-being are improving? • How is the knowledge gained through intervention experience being used to refine strategies, solve problems, and achieve appropriate conditions for successful case closure?</p>	

<u>Case Practice Questions</u>	<u>Comments &amp; Evidence of Readiness for Closure</u>
<p><b>PROGRESS TOWARDS SAFE CASE CLOSURE:</b> • Have risks to the child and family been removed with the likelihood of future risk sufficiently minimized? • Is the child residing in a home that service team members expect to endure until the child reaches the age of majority? • What provisions are in place so that the child and family's basic needs will continue to be met? • Are the parents/caregivers willing and able to assist, support, supervise, and care for the children dependably on an ongoing basis? • What sustainable supports are in place to assist the family/caregivers with any extraordinary or ongoing needs? • Has the case progressed to a level at which there is reasonable confidence that the child's safety, stability, placement, and well-being will be sustained over time? <b>If YES</b>, what evidence are you relying upon? <b>If NO</b>, what assistance might you need to move the case further toward safe case closure (see below)?</p>	

### Assistance to Caseworkers

When the complexity of a case challenges the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the caseworker, he/she should have access to assistance to overcome the barriers to successful resolution of the case. Providing the caseworker with assistance needed to succeed, on a case-by-case basis, is the ultimate goal of this process. Based on the worker's self-assessment of practice strengths and needs in a case and identification of any barriers that may be thwarting practice and results, the worker may request specific measures that will assist him/her in moving the case forward. Listed are some areas in which assistance may be requested by a caseworker and offered by a supervisor:

- Mentoring assistance when special craft knowledge or skills may be required with a case, especially for a caseworker who is a novice or advanced beginner in the art of practice.
- Supervisor assistance in addressing case situations

where complexity, conflict, or other factors combine to impede and complicate routine practice.

- Specialty consultation to add expert knowledge that may be required in successfully serving children or caregivers having special needs or unusual life circumstances.
- Multi-agency relations and coordination support required when a child or caregiver is receiving services via multiple agencies, funding sources, and providers.
- Training to acquire special knowledge or skills required to serve a child or family with a particular need or profile. This may be necessary to serve a particular target population.
- Other assistance that may be necessary to do good practice and get good results in a case.

### Assistance Requested and Offered in this Case